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Rev. S. E. Herrick  
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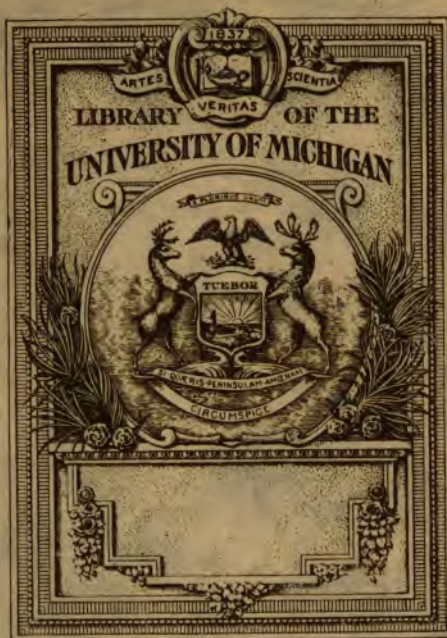
SERMON

*Commemorative of the Life of*

REV. DORUS CLARKE, D. D.

BY

REV. S. E. HERRICK, D. D.



THE GIFT OF  
Mr. S. A. Green

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In Memory of  
*THE REV. DORUS CLARKE, D. D.*

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A SERMON

PREACHED IN



MOUNT VERNON CHURCH, BOSTON,

ON SUNDAY MORNING,

*March 23, 1884,*

BY

REV. S. E. HERRICK, D. D.

CAMBRIDGE

Printed at the *Riverside Press*

1884



REV. DORUS CLARKE, D. D.

1797. Born, Westhampton, Mass., January 2d.  
1813. Enters Williams College, æt. 16.  
1814. His father, Jonathan Clarke, Jr., dies February 23d, æt. 39.  
1817. Graduates B. A. at Williams College, æt. 20.  
1820. Finishes the Theological Course at Andover, æt. 23.  
1821. With Drs. Nettleton and Griffin.  
1823. Ordained pastor at Blandford, February 23d, æt. 26.  
1824. Marries; æt. 27, Miss Bliss, æt. 22, May 20th.  
1835. Installed pastor at Springfield (Chicopee Falls) March 4th, æt. 38.  
1836. Publishes "Lectures to Young People," æt. 39.  
1838. His mother, Jemima Lyman (Mrs. Gaius Searle) dies October 31st, æt. 63.  
1838. Writes "Letters to Hon. Horace Mann," by "Clericus Hampdenensis."  
1841. Removes to Boston, æt. 44.  
1841. Edits "New England Puritan."  
1846. Edits "Christian Times" and "Christian Parlor Magazine."  
1864. Publishes "Fugitives."  
1866. Edits Westhampton "Reunion Memorial."  
1868. Receives degree of D. D. from Williams College.  
1869. Publishes "Oneness of the Christian Church," æt. 72.  
1871. Publishes "Orthodox Congregationalism," etc., æt. 74.  
1872. Reviews the "Oberlin Council," æt. 75.  
1874. Golden Wedding in Boston, May 20th, æt. 77.  
1874. Publishes "Revision of the English Version of the Bible."  
1875. Paper upon "The Life and writings of P. G. F. Guizot," æt. 78.  
1876. Compiles "Ancestry and Writings," æt. 79.  
1877. Essay on "Tri-Unity of God," æt. 80.  
1878. Mrs. Hannah A. B. Clarke dies May 9th, æt. 76 years, 4 months and 18 days.  
1879. Writes "Saying the Catechism," æt. 82.  
1879. Delivers Centennial Address at Westhampton, September 3d.  
1884. Enters into rest on the morning of Saturday, March 8th, æt. 87 years, 2 months, and 6 days.

*In Pace Requiescat.*

## SERMON.

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Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him :  
I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him ; I will be with him in  
trouble ; I will deliver him, and honor him.

With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

PSA. xci. 14-16.

THIS promise was signally fulfilled in the experience of that venerable servant of God whose life we have set apart this service to commemorate. God "satisfied him with long life, and shewed him His salvation." He felt that his years were full, and that for him life, under its present conditions, could do little or nothing more. The last time I saw him, but three or four days previous to his departure, when I expressed the hope that we should soon see him about again among men, and in his accustomed place in the sanctuary, he said cheerfully, "I have lived a long life, and am ready to go when it is God's will." And then, with a significant gesture, running his finger along a fold of his garment, he added, "I have come to feel that it will make no difference whether I stop at this point or go on an inch or two further." He was "satisfied with long life." And it is pleasant to think that in his case the feeling was one of satisfaction, and not of satiety ; of content, and not of surfeit. He

was not ready to give up life out of pique because it had not yielded him enough, nor out of weariness because it had demanded of him too much. His long-protracted years had not caused him to cut friendship with time, nor estranged him from the interests of the world; neither had the strength of his more than fourscore years become "labor and sorrow." He was not soured on the one hand, nor *blasé* on the other, but satisfied. Had he been permitted to come back to his wonted degree of health, we cannot doubt that we should still have seen him at ministers' meetings and conferences, at prayer-meetings and lectures, taking the same enthusiastic interest in all social and religious matters, ready to speak his incisive word, or write his keen analytical paper for the truth as he saw it, as though life were all before him, and he were eager to live it out; and yet, called to go, he could leave it all without regret, as one who is satisfied. There is nothing in long life, considered by itself, to produce this mood of entire contentment. It never springs out of the mere protraction of existence. Neither is it produced by any of the material conditions under which life is protracted whether pleasant or otherwise. If these conditions are pleasant and prosperous, one is naturally reluctant to give them up; if they are hard and painful, one may be eager to be released from them; and the one mood is as far from satisfaction as the other. But life is right, is satisfying, neither too long nor too short, to any man who comes under these conditions prescribed by the Psalmist. It is the assertion not only of inspiration, but of sound philosophy and of unquestionable experience. The man to whom life has brought these

things,— the knowledge of God's name, a genuine and just and ever expansive acquaintance with the benignity and majesty of His character; a central and supreme affection fixed upon Him beyond the possibility of any distraction or rivalry; a position "set on high," garrisoned by the reality of His protection and fortified by the certitude of His promises; a relation of constant correspondence with heaven, whereby one answers to God's call and gets God's answer to his own; the experience of God's presence *in* trouble and God's deliverance *out* of trouble,— the man, I say, to whom life has brought these things, is satisfied with life. He lives long enough; he does not live too long; he has done the work he was sent into the world for; the world has accomplished its ministry to him; he has seen the salvation of God. Singularly in keeping with these expressions of the Psalmist was Dr. Clarke's mental attitude, as expressed not only in the conversation to which I have referred, but as exhibited in a letter written within a fortnight of his departure.<sup>1</sup> "For five weeks," he says, "I have been in the hands of the physicians. My difficulties are those which are incident to old age. All talk encouragingly, but I think it is a matter of doubt whether I am able to go from home much more. My earthly work is done. O that it had been done better! My hope in Christ is unshaken, and sometimes I would be glad to depart. I shall much regret not to visit Westhampton again and your new church; but there is a much more splendid place of worship — *up there!*"

<sup>1</sup> To the Rev. W. C. Scofield, of Westhampton, under date of February 25.

In saying that Dr. Clarke was satisfied with life, however, let me not be misapprehended. This is quite a different thing from saying that he was self-satisfied ; not what he had put into life, but what God had put into it for him, was the source of his content. No man ever expressed a deeper sense of his own personal ill-desert and self-dissatisfaction. A score of times, I think, I have heard him quote that version of the fifty-first Psalm, by Dr. Watts, as expressive of his own self-abasement : —

“ Lord, I am vile, conceived in sin,  
And born unholy and unclean.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ No bleeding bird, nor bleeding beast,  
Nor hyssop-branch, nor sprinkling priest,  
Nor running brook, nor flood, nor sea,  
Can wash the dismal stain away.

“ Jesus, my God, thy blood alone,  
Hath power sufficient to atone ;  
Thy blood can make me white as snow,  
No Jewish types can cleanse me so.”

His long life, not as he offered it to God, but as God filled it with Himself and gave it to him, was satisfying.

And his long life so filled is satisfying, or ought to be, to us. It was well rounded out, full-orbed, complete ; the shock of corn was fully ripe. Such lives make us sensible of the continuity and unity of the world's history. They bring the far past into the possession of the present. Through this man's eyes our children have looked back upon the days of Lafayette, Napoleon, Washington. He has lived under all the presidents. He knew and conversed with the

patriots of the Revolution. He has witnessed our nation's growth almost from the beginning. The religious and eleemosynary institutions, many of which now seem so venerable to us, were mostly born within his memory. He could remember when there were no Bible nor tract societies; no temperance organizations; no missionary boards; no organized work for the poor or the illiterate; no theological schools; no religious newspapers. He saw the greatest and best part of the world's greatest and best century. Nay, in its progress he himself played no inconsiderable part; and it is fitting that such a life should not be permitted to pass quite out of the sight of living men without some grateful tribute of recognition to the goodness and grace of God that were manifested in it and through it.

Dorus Clarke was born in Westhampton, Mass., January 2, 1797, the eldest of a family of eight children, of whom for nearly nine years he was the sole survivor.<sup>1</sup> I may here state also, in passing, that he outlived all who were his classmates both in College and in the Theological Seminary. His ancestry, both upon his father's and mother's side, was of unmixed Puritan blood for six generations, — a fact which he verified by his own historical research and in which he gloried to the last with good reason. His first paternal ancestor in this country, Lieutenant William Clark, was a member of the church in Dorchester as early as 1637. His first maternal ancestor, Richard Lyman, came to this country in the same ship with John Eliot, the celebrated apostle to the Indians, in

<sup>1</sup> His brother, Rev. Tertius Strong Clarke, D. D., died in Neath, Bradford Co., Pa., April 12, 1875, æt. 76.

1631 ; and, four years later, was one of that company of emigrants who set out on a long journey of two weeks through the wilderness to the western country of that day, and, with Rev. Thomas Hooker and his family, became the founders of Hartford ; and for two centuries and more the Clarks and the Lymans, together with the Strongs and the Kingsleys, with whom they have intermarried, have formed a conspicuous element in the religious and civil life of the river towns from Hartford to Northampton. Dr. Clarke, in one of his historical papers, has told us that "fifty years ago there were more than ninety members in the Congregational Church at Northampton by the name of Clark ; and that from 1691 down to the present (1876), with but two short intervals, there has always been one deacon in that Church of the same name, and sometimes two, and sometimes three simultaneously." Is religion hereditary ? If we may not say that absolutely, we must at least acknowledge, in the light of such a fact, that God is faithful in His promise to show mercy unto the children and the children's children of "such as keep His covenant and of those that remember His commandments to do them."

The immediate influences under which Dr. Clarke's childhood was passed were of the primitive, Puritan sort, and scored permanent results upon his character. He has been jocularly called "the last of the Puritans." I should be sorry to think the jest one of those true words that vindicate the old proverb ; but the training of his boyhood, I fear, has not a very frequent imitation to-day. The present age seems to be in no great danger of making many

Puritans. In an old and faded manuscript written, as I judge from internal evidences, some thirty-five years ago, Dr. Clarke has preserved some reminiscences of his grandmother; "impressions," he says, "which she made on my youthful and then susceptible heart, which no lapse of time or eternity will efface." The godly old lady takes the boy behind her on the pillion to neighborhood prayer-meetings, talks to him by the way; is full of parable and quaint illustration; finds resemblances and metaphors in the woods and fields through which they ride, that fasten divine truth in his mind; succeeds in making him conscious that he is girt around with some supernatural and infinite presence; fastens upon him the old fundamental Puritan conviction that *God is*, so that he can never afterwards get away from it. "After conversing with me about the great God who fills heaven and earth, she closed her description of his ubiquity by saying, 'My dear grandson, wherever you see *any motion*, you may always be certain that *God is there!*' At that instant happening to notice an involuntary motion in one of my fingers, the thought went like a javelin to my heart that *God was with me then*. If I have a hope of heaven that will not fail me, if I am at all useful in the ministerial or editorial vocation, it will be owing, I doubt not, in a preëminent degree, to the counsels and prayers of that grandmother whose memory is precious, and who long since went up to receive her great reward."

Westhampton did not become a separate town until 1778, less than twenty years before Dr. Clarke's birth. Up to that time it was included in the town of Northampton, and must have constituted a part of

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the pastoral charge of Jonathan Edwards. As such it must have shared in that great work of God in 1735, of which President Edwards wrote the "Narrative," in which in six months' time no less than three hundred souls were supposed to have been converted to God. Probably, also, it had its part in the "Great Awakening" of a few years later, under Whitefield. When our friend was in his boyhood, the men and women were still living who had been harvested to the church in that mighty movement. Some of his own kindred, no doubt, were among them. He must have heard and been deeply impressed by the stories of that marvelous awakening. The church of Westhampton was doubtless formed as one of its immediate results. He knew men who had trembled for their sins under the ghostly and terrific power of the Northampton pastor; men who had bowed and broken under the storm of Whitefield's eloquence. He came up in a time when the old eighteenth century stolidity had been melted down in the churches; when men and women had awaked to some degree of moral earnestness and spiritual devotion, and the religious life had become more of a reality than a pretense. What wonder is it that, to the very end of his days, he felt the necessity of the recurrence of such spiritual awakenings, and urged upon churches and ministers wherever he went the importance of seeking them and laboring for them at whatever sacrifice?

Another factor in the formation of his character and religious opinions was the influence of his childhood's pastor, the Rev. Enoch Hale,<sup>1</sup> and especially

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Enoch Hale, the first minister of Westhampton, was brother of Nathan Hale, the patriot-martyr of the Revolution, and grandfather of Rev. Dr. E. E. Hale, of this city.

his fidelity in the religious and doctrinal instruction of the children of his charge. Many of you remember the pleasant evening spent in our chapel a few years ago, when our venerable friend read to us his reminiscences of "Saying the Catechism in Westhampton" when he was a boy. Never was *raconteur* happier in telling a story than he was in rehearsing that recollection. And probably no story ever produced so immediate and popular effect. It passed into the proceedings of a grave historical society. Printed as a brochure, it went through edition after edition. Papers and magazines quoted it all over the land. Scores of letters came to its author filled with congratulation and gratitude. It made Westhampton famous throughout the country. It kindled not only an enthusiasm for saying the Catechism here in our own Sunday-school under his personal instruction, but what amounted almost to a revival and resurrection of that fine old logical and theological masterpiece in hundreds of other Sunday-schools where it had been forgotten or its existence had become unknown. Dr. Clarke's theology through life, if it was not bounded by the Westminster Confession, found in that Confession its best expression. That symbol has the exactness and clearness which commended it to his analytical and logical mind. There was nothing misty or indefinite in his faith. The Catechism put it into a form of sound words, which was concrete, stereoscopic. It could be held up before the understanding, turned around, and looked at on all sides. He did not believe that a better Catechism ever would or could be made. I think he was right.

Dr. Clarke's steadfast and tender loyalty to these

influences of his childhood — local, ancestral, pastoral — to the very latest days of his life constituted an admirable trait in his character. Westhampton was written on his heart. “It often happens,” says a distinguished writer, “that some one spot, uncoveted by others, visited by no pilgrim feet, may be more to you than all the world besides; it may be but a bit of meadow-land, with a path beneath the elms; or an old house that looks upon a street; or a bench in a plain village church. But if it be *there* that your childish steps ran free; if through those windows you looked ere the tint of wonder had yet flown; if at that shrine you knelt in your first deep sorrow; if shadowy forms surround you there with benign and holy looks, and tones are in the air that you alone can hear; — the place will have for you a sacredness quite unique and immeasurable; a magnitude of interest that no lines of longitude can define.”<sup>1</sup> Westhampton was that sacred spot towards which our venerable friend’s thoughts thus made their daily pilgrimage. They peopled its simple shrines with shadowy forms, which few or none of its living inhabitants could see. The deepest and tenderest experiences of his life were rooted there, and towards it he fondly turned when the shadows closed around him, as a child at evening seeks repose upon the breast of its mother. And the old town among the hills tenderly reciprocated the affection of her son. She would have him for her centennial orator, and no other, to place the wreath of honor upon her brow; and when he passed away her one church adopted the grateful minute: —

“*Resolved*, That in the decease of the Rev. Dorus Clarke,

<sup>1</sup> Martineau, *Hours of Thought*.

D. D., a native of this town, we have a sense of personal bereavement. The friendship subsisting between him and this people has been as beautiful as it was phenomenal. Beginning in his youth, it has seemed to strengthen with his advancing years. By graceful words and substantial deeds he has written his own memorial among us. His name will be fragrant after all who knew him in the flesh shall have passed away. We revere his memory, as of one who having fought a good fight, finished his course and kept the faith, has gone to receive a crown of life."

He entered Williams College at the early age of sixteen, and graduated in the class of 1817, one of the smallest classes ever graduated from the college, having but seven members, one of whom was the late Governor Emory Washburn. While in college he passed through a marked religious experience, to which he always recurred as the period of his conversion and personal consecration to the service of God. Like his religious beliefs, his religious experience had about it no penumbra. It was clearly defined, — a period of overwhelming conviction, a deep and painful consciousness of personal ill-desert, a protracted experience of condemnation, a sudden revelation of God's forgiving love in Jesus Christ, a night separated from a day by sunrise. His own experience doubtless led him to be cautious, if not suspicious, of alleged conversions of a different type. He did not doubt, indeed, that God in the sovereignty of His grace might take different methods with different men, but he felt that there was a normal mode of procedure, the essential features of which would be present in every case; there must be the new birth as the indispensable condition of newness of life.

From Williamstown he passed to Andover, where he had for his classmates William Goodell, for forty years a missionary in the Turkish empire, Daniel Temple, for twenty years in Malta, Asa Cummings, for thirty years editor of the "Christian Mirror;" and for his contemporaries in adjacent classes, Jonas King, Asa Thurston, Hiram Bingham, Levi Spaulding, Miron Winslow, Pliny Fiske, Orville Dewey, Henry J. Ripley, and Baxter Dickinson, — such a galaxy of sainted names as to dim by their brilliancy any other equal period in the history even of Andover. The great missionary movement in this country was young as yet, but it had grown to a gigantic stature even in its youth. Williamstown had cradled and Andover had nursed it. Our friend caught much of its spirit. He had been a college boy under the shadow of the Williamstown haystack; he joined at Andover in study and worship with the early apostles of the American Board. To the end of his life no cause touched his sensibilities more tenderly, or raised his prayers to a higher degree of fervor, than that of the conversion of the world to God. He longed to see the history of 1740 made universal. To this end he would have every minister a missionary. He meant to be one himself. For this he sought to supplement the scholastic labors of the seminary by a personal acquaintance with the spirit and methods of practical evangelists. He sought out Nettleton and Griffin; he followed them in their tours; he sat at their feet, if so he might catch their secret, and be baptized with their baptism.

For twelve years, from February 5, 1823, he was the pastor at Blandford. He seems to have awakened a


sort of enthusiastic affection among the people upon his first going among them. They heard him, and were satisfied; they called him, built a new church for him, and he stayed there according to the good old fashion, now very much in desuetude, through a pastorate not unusual in those days, but what would be considered a very long one now. And that pastorate among the western hills, in days when there were none of the present means for the diffusion of intelligence; when tidings crept over the land slowly, and were often arrested permanently by the height of a mountain range or a river's width, — was already exerting influences that were to sweep across the broad continent, and have perhaps their first and most enduring issues amid the mountains of Oregon and on the shores of the Pacific. It was a most impressive sight, which we witnessed at his funeral, — a sight which I felt at the time should not be marred by the impertinence of any other participation, — that of two venerable men,<sup>1</sup> uttering their grateful reminiscences over the coffin of him who had been their boyhood's minister in Blandford threescore years ago.

Shortly after his settlement at Blandford there came a new and life-long benediction to him in the person of his wife, Miss Hannah Alvard Bliss, of Longmeadow. I would like to speak a few words concerning her here could I do so fitly. But any who knew Mrs. Clarke, however slightly, will appreciate the difficulty. It would be as hard to characterize her as it would be to describe a delicate fragrance or to define loveliness. I can think of no

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Daniel Butler, D. D., and Rev. Cushing Eells, D. D.

adjective that so well describes her, as she appeared to me who had the privilege of being her minister for the few closing years of her life, as the word *gracious*. She had a character that was suffused by that Spirit whose fruit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and meekness.

Six years more of pastoral life were spent at Chicopee Falls, then a part of Springfield, which was rising into importance by reason of its manufacturing interests, and which was of course filled with such a multitude of young men and women as would be drawn to such a place for its opportunities of employment. To these he now devoted himself with great eagerness and with great success. And there, too, as it ever seemed to be the case with him, his labors for an immediate object swept on and out far beyond the circumference of their original intention. The work done in behalf of the youth of Chicopee was blessed to multitudes through the land; the words which he spake to them penetrated a hundred factory villages; the press gave them wings. His lectures to the young were published, in several editions, both in Boston and New York. Indeed there was always a sprightliness about Dr. Clarke's pen, whatever his subjects and however grave, that did not injure their gravity, but gave them an entrance readily to youthful minds. His health being overtaxed by pastoral cares and labors, he was compelled to resign his charge; and he then became a proprietor and editor of the "New England Puritan," at that time, perhaps, the most influential religious journal in New England. His strictly pastoral work was done; but from that time till his death, more than forty years, he



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Herrick

In memory of the  
Rev. Dorus Clarke

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